

Note: takes place in the 2nd loop of arc 2  
there is also a manga version of this [short story](#).

## Roswaal Mansion Girls Party (Bathing Room Edition)

[Emilia: ....Mmm.]

Slowly, from the tips of the toes, long, white legs slipped into the hot, faintly cloudy water. Her thighs trembling for a moment from the heat of the bath, she purred softly from the warmth, and let her limbs sink below the surface.

[Emilia: Ahhhh...]

With her long, silver hair simply gathered in her hands, she lowered her body into the hot water, and let out a long sigh.

She was beautiful. Her silvery hair was like a reflection of the night's moonlight, and her bluish-purple eyes seemed like they were inlaid with gemstones. Her white skin, as clear as fresh snow, was slightly flushed with color, and if anyone, man or woman, saw her, they would have to admire her splendor.

Her name was Emilia, and she was a lovely maiden whose fine looks were a gift from her elven lineage.

[Emilia: A bath in a tub big enough to soak your whole body always feels nice...]

Leaning against the edge of the bath, Emilia whispered blissfully while her cheeks reddened.

In a bathing room as large as this, the bath was able to easily accommodate Emilia's long, outstretched legs. As one would expect of the mansion of Margrave Roswaal, the bathing room was as large as a public bath. It was true that Emilia didn't exactly understand his position in society, but the fact that he was letting her stay at his mansion was an ongoing, painful reminder each day that he was a person of importance.

Her protector, her supporter -- she had to meet Roswaal's expectations. Her awareness of this was one of the reasons she was spending each day living an unfamiliar lifestyle, striving to advance her studies.

Having said that, even the always cautious Emilia, with her clothing shed, bathing by herself, was simply a girl - nay, a beautiful girl.

[Emilia: Hm... I think I might have put on a little weight.]

Her voice trembled as she lifted her arms from the bath, and pinched her white upper arm between her fingers. Perhaps it was due to eating regular meals as part of her recent life at the mansion; she might be overeating. Compared to her life before, life at the mansion didn't

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give her as many chances to move around, either. Given that, gaining weight was only natural.

[Emilia: Puck will start complaining again at this rate...]

In truth, Emilia didn't worry much about her own health. Puck, the cat spirit bound to Emilia by contract, was another matter. More than Emilia herself, he was concerned, and made sure to always remind her to take care of herself.

Puck, who had appointed himself her substitute parent and spent time with her as family, cared almost too much for her, and often instructed her on how to handle various parts of her life. She was grateful, of course, but sometimes the little lectures grew tiresome.

[Emilia: Do after-bath stretches, and do my hair, and do my nails, and, um...]

Counting on her fingers all the things she'd promised Puck to do after bathing, she started to feel a bit melancholy. Perhaps having her daily routine start to feel tiresome meant that she was getting worn down.

The incident at the capital -- having her emblem stolen, and the big mess of a day that it took to get it back. It was only a few days ago; perhaps she was still physically and mentally exhausted.

[Emilia: I can't be like that. This isn't the time to be having second thoughts.]

With only thoughts of the past springing up, Emilia tried to cut them off by smacking both hands to her cheeks.

The path she had chosen for herself wasn't easy enough to let a little exhaustion slow her down. Even from the start, she'd been behind. To recover from that was going to require a real struggle.

And so, While Emilia was rebuilding her motivation...

[Ram: Oh my, Emilia-sama?]

The door to the changing room opened, and someone stepped into the bathing room. Emilia turned to see who had spoken, and saw a pink-haired girl approaching, with a towel concealing her naked body.

She was more petite, but her flawless skin and adorable face were a match for Emilia. The steam-dampened towel clung to her, and revealed her body was well-sculpted, despite it's delicacy. Looking towards Emilia, she inclined her head slightly.

[Ram: It's quite rare for you to be bathing at this hour. Would it be better if we come back later?]

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[Emilia: No, it's fine. I wouldn't say something as mean as that.]

[Ram: I see. Thank you very much. Rem, do come in.]

As Emilia, still soaking in the bath, answered her, the girl - Ram, bowed her head slightly without changing her expression. She then turned towards the changing room and called out to another: her younger sister.

[Rem: Nee-sama, it's alright since it was Emilia-sama who was here before us, but what would you have done if it had been Subaru-kun? That wouldn't do.]

With that, Ram's nearly-identical blue-haired sister appeared, following her into the bathing room.

Compared to Ram, her eyes seemed slightly gentler, but other than that, they were very similar. Her features and delicate form matched her sister - Rem's chest was, perhaps, larger.

Rem was also covering herself with a towel, and at her words, Ram turned her head and replied [Ram: When you put it that way, that's true.] If the bath had been occupied not by Emilia, but by the boy who was staying as a guest...

[Rem: If Subaru-kun was looking at nee-sama with his dirty eyes, Rem simply couldn't tolerate it.]

[Ram: If that happened, I'd simply have to gouge out his eyes. His last sight would be a parting gift from me.]

[Emilia: There's no need to say scary things like that. Subaru is a good boy.]

[Ram: Perhaps your estimation of him is a little off.]

Responding candidly to the comments from her younger sister and Emilia, Ram, now sweating, softly placed one leg in the bath. As she placed herself diagonally forward from Emilia, Ram's normally expressionless face relaxed slightly.

Noticing that, Emilia smiled faintly.

[Ram: ...What's the matter, Emilia-sama? You seem amused.]

[Emilia: Mhmm, just a little. Even Ram relaxes a little in the bath, it seems.]

[Ram: I'm not a doll, after all. Though i won't deny that I'm as pretty as a doll.]

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Speaking in a hard voice, Ram quickly tightened her expression. Emilia regretted having caused her the embarrassment of being noticed, but now Rem entered the bath, across from Ram.

[Rem: Nee-sama's way of always being resolute is wonderful, of course, but I also think that the way she lets down her guard in the bath is adorable as well.]

[Emilia: Oh, you mean that this always happens?]

[Rem: Yes, it's nee-sama's little secret.]

Showing a little color in her cheeks, Rem spoke with a humor in her voice that was rare for her.

In some ways, even more than Ram, Rem tended to build walls between herself and others. Having had that impression of her, to be treated like this was an unexpected delight for Emilia.

[Ram: ...Rem. Let's not have too much of that.]

[Rem: Sorry, nee-sama. I just can't help talking about how wonderful nee-sama is.]

[Ram: Well i suppose it can't be helped. I'm a nee-sama that anyone would boast about without thinking twice.]

Ram was always kind towards Rem, but today she seemed especially so. Couple with Rem's own attitude, Emilia felt it was a lovely change.

[Emilia: Do you think that, when you're naked in the bath, you can forget unimportant things and speak freely...!?!]

[Ram: Emilia-sama, what's the matter?]

[Emilia: Oh, oh my... I think maybe... I just figured out something amazing... something like the real truth about the world...]

[Rem: Nee-sama, nee-sama, it's terrible. It seems Emilia-sama is becoming dizzy.]

[Ram: Rem, Rem, it's terrible. It seems Emilia-sama is half-asleep.]

[Emilia: Even though I'm in the bath!?!]

Being treated as though she were dizzy and half-asleep, Emilia sank under the surface in surprise. She blew bubbles playfully, then came back above water with a gasp.

[Emilia: Mmm, the two of you are so mean...]

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[Rem: Emilia-sama, it seems to me your imagination is being poisoned by Subaru-kun.”

[Emilia: R... really? That couldn't... hmm, I don't think that could be...]

Having had that pointed out by Rem, Emilia looked troubled.

Since the uproar in the capital a few days ago, that boy had been welcomed at the mansion and working as a servant.

His expressions and actions often seemed incomprehensible to Emilia, and he seemed to surprise her every time they met.

Certainly, it was possible she was being influenced by the strange boy, but...

[Emilia: But, if you're going to say that, the two of you spend a lot more time in contact with him, right? If being in the tub and naked doesn't make a difference, then maybe you're changing because of Subaru-kun?”

[Rem: That would be]

[Ram: Utterly impossible.]

As Emilia tried to turn the tables on them, the twins replied in perfect unison. It seemed like a sharp retort, but it wasn't made with a strong sense of rejection. Even from Emilia's point of view, somehow or other the twins' relationship with Subaru wasn't bad. They'd almost certainly get used to each other soon.

[Emilia: Although I'm not really sure it would be good to let him stay here too long and get caught up in things...]

[.....]

Hearing Emilia's sad whisper, the twins only narrowed their eyes and said nothing.

The future awaiting Emilia was the battle for the fate of the country, to determine who would sit on the throne - the royal selection. The theft of her emblem in the capital was an attempt to interfere with Emilia's candidacy. Anyone near Emilia could certainly get caught in a deadly situation like that again. She hesitated to think it was alright to let a light hearted, good-natured boy like that get dragged in with her.

[Ram: Perhaps that's not something you need to worry about, Emilia-sama.]

[Emilia: Ram?]

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[Ram: Regardless of what Barusu thinks, if he doesn't prove useful as a servant, he'll be asked to leave in the near future. This decision has been left to us, so please don't trouble yourself about it.]

[Emilia: ...Thank you.]

Emilia expressed her gratitude to Ram for interrupting her gloomy thoughts and saying that. Her deliberately harsh words were meant as a defensive line around Emilia's heart. If it became necessary, she would play the villain to spare Emilia.

[Emilia: It seems that Ram and Rem really are kind when you are naked.]

[Ram: Please, stop adding 'when you are naked' to that.]

[Rem: Indeed, Emilia-sama. Nee-sama is always kind even when she isn't naked.]

At Emilia and Rem's slightly off responses, Ram let out a deep sigh. Then, as the three of them were gathered together in the bath, the shadow of a truly rare fourth appeared.

[Beatrice: ...oh, for heaven's sake. It's just one thing after another.]

Opening the changing room door and showing up in the bathing room was a girl in an elegant dress. Her cream-colored hair was done up in horizontal curls, and her lovely appearance was almost doll-like. Her red, puffed-out cheeks looked like fruit, and she glared at the three in the bath with round, bulging eyes.

[Ram: What's the matter, Beatrice-sama? Is it Barusu?]

[Beatrice: That's exactly correct, and that makes me furious, I suppose. He really is a truly aggravating person! 'Door Crossing' doesn't work on him, so this is the only place I can escape, I suppose.]

[Ram: Even Barusu wouldn't dare launch an attack on the bathing room, after all.]

[Beatrice: That was my thought as well. I'll just have to spend some time here, I suppose.]

With a haughtiness that didn't seem to fit with her appearance, Beatrice folded her short arms and stood in a corner of the bathing room. However, Emilia rose from the bath, and walked towards Beatrice.

Looking up at the naked Emilia, Beatrice made an irritated face.

[Beatrice: ...What do you want? Betty is only here to spend some time.]

[Emilia: Don't say that. You've already come to the bathing room, Ram and Rem are here too, wouldn't it be nice for Beatrice to have a bath too?]

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[Beatrice: It wouldn't be nice at all! I can't imagine why you'd say that, I suppose. It's certainly not funny.]

Beatrice tried to shoo away Emilia with a wave of her hand, like she was shooing an insect.

Faced with that stubborn attitude, normally Emilia would have kept her distance, but Emilia was a little different this evening. She glanced behind her, and saw two heads nod.

[Beatrice: ...Wait a moment, I suppose. What's the meaning of that signal just now?]

[Emilia: Oh, it's nothing. ...Ah! Beatrice, Puck is washing himself!]

[Beatrice: Oh!? Where, I suppose!?]

Falling for an old trick, Beatrice's eyes followed the direction that Emilia pointed.

The next moment, Emilia picked up Beatrice's small body in her arms, and tossed her towards the bath. Crying out "Nyaa!", Beatrice flew towards the tub.

[Beatrice: What are you thinking... No matter, it will take more than this!]

The parabolic arc Beatrice was tracing stopped in mid-air. Using magic, she attached her thrown body to the air itself. She slowly began to move towards the side of the bathing room, but...

[Ram: Come now, Beatrice-sama, don't be like that.]

[Rem: Stay with us a little while. I've always wanted to try washing Beatrice-sama's hair.]

[Beatrice: You...you wouldn't!]

Ram and Rem had each grabbed a sleeve of Beatrice's dress as she tried to fly away.

There was a splash, and then Beatrice, now soaking wet, sprayed bathwater from her mouth, and glared at the other three.

[Beatrice: The three of you are completely under the influence of that strange fellow.]

Listening to Beatrice's words, which were somewhere between a cry and a roar, Emilia smiled.

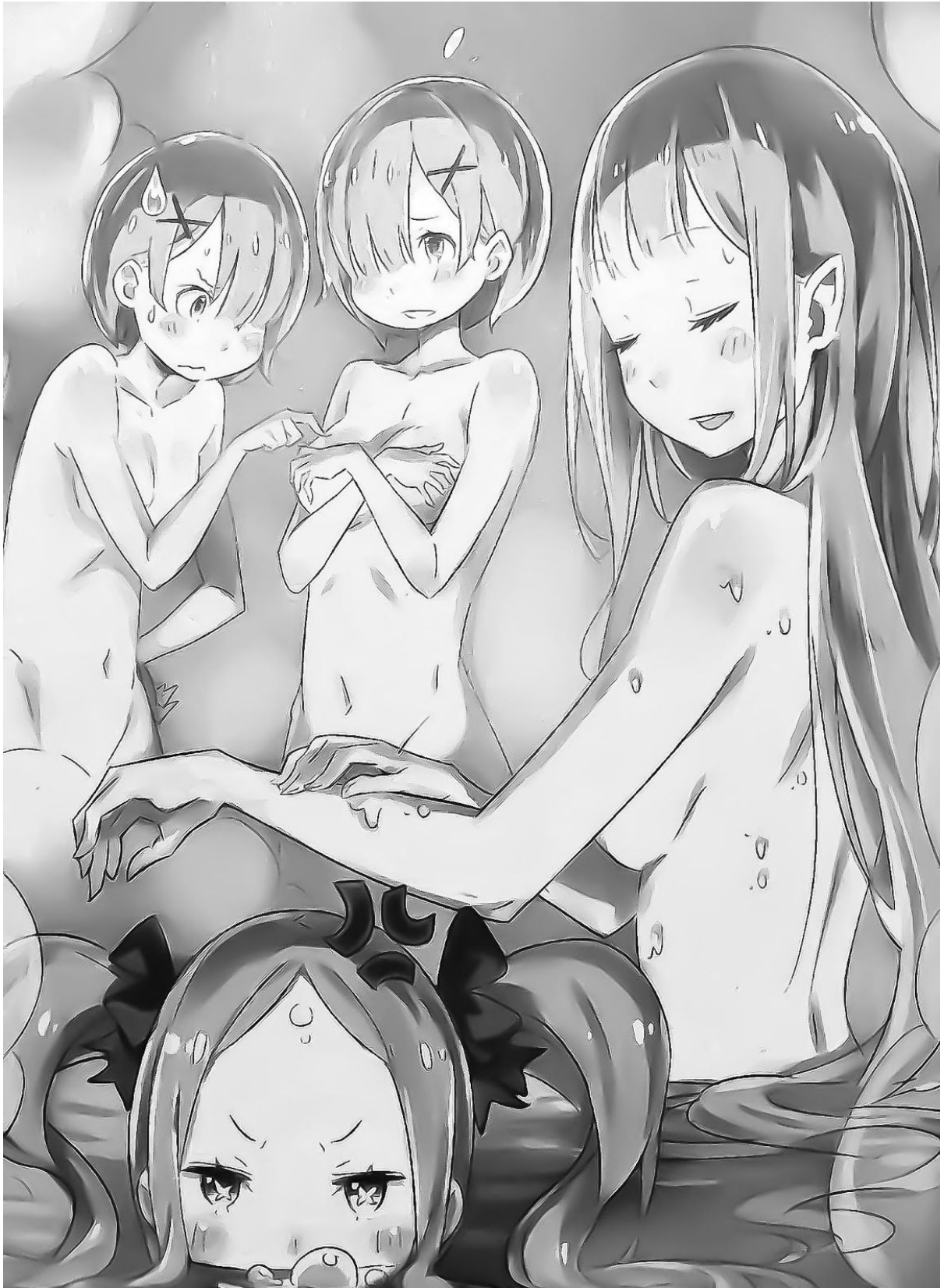
Smiled, thought that perhaps it was true, and continued to smile.

That day, at the Roswaal estate's bathing room, the girlish voices echoed on for a while.



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The End





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